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A LIBRARY OF MANY RARE BOOKS, AND A RICH COLLECTION OF VALUABLE HISTORICAL OBJECTS

BY WILLIAM HARDEN, LIBRARIAN.

It is not to be wondered at that in the course of nearly a century since its founding the Georgia Historical Society has acquired, among the books composing its Library of more than 40,000 volumes, not a few works of rarity and, in consequence thereof, of some value.

The collecting of a Library did not, for nearly a decade after its founding, receive the attention of its members to such an extent as might have been reasonably expected, but with the absorption of the old Savannah Library Society, in the year 1847, whereby its shelves were enriched with the well-selected stock of the latter, the growth of that department of the Society was more steadily developed, and, at times since then, special efforts have been successfully put forth to strengthen certain sections of the collection. Thus, about two score years ago, attention was called to the need of filling up gaps in the material on hand for the study of English History, and many books were added thereto, at considerable expense.

GEORGIA NEWSPAPERS.

Perhaps the most valuable of the Library's possessions is the collection of newspapers issued in the State of Georgia, but principally in Savannah. The most important of these is the almost complete file of the *Georgia Gazette* which was started in Savannah by James Johnston, in April, 1763, the first Georgia newspaper. Our files of papers following the suspension of the *Gazette* is full to the date of establishing of the *Georgian*, in 1818, of which we have the full office file from its beginning to the date of its failure in 1853. Other newspapers are too numerous to mention here.

STEPHENS'S "JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS IN GEORGIA;" AND "THE CASTLE-BUILDERS: A POLITICAL NOVEL"

One of the rarest books relating to Georgia is "A Journal of the Proceedings in Georgia, from Oct. 20, 1737," by William Stephens, Secretary to the Trustees. While this work is what is generally classed as "scarce," the 1st and 2nd volumes are not as hard to find as the 3d which is seldom to be met with. The Society's copy is complete.

Of still greater value is a book in this Library called "The Castle-Builders; or The History of William Stephens, of the Isle of Wight, Esq., Lately Deceased. A Political Novel, Never Before Published in any Language," By Thomas Stephens, son of William, which the "Dictionary of National Biography" describes as "a curious memoir of his father." Both the writer of the article in the "Dictionary" and Allibone's "Critical Dictionary of English and American Authors" mention only a second edition, published in 1759, and it is a copy of that edition owned by the Society. It would seem, therefore, that no copy of the first has been located. Allibone says of this edition (the 2d) that it is "very rare."

There is in the collection, of course, a copy of the original edition of Hugh McCall's "History of Georgia," long out of print, and the Library is rich in works pertaining to the history of the State, as is most surely to be presumed, but a list of even a fair selection of the most interesting would require too much space here.

BOOKS OTHER THAN THOSE ON GEORGIA HISTORY.

The oldest book in the Library is a copy of Lucan's "Pharsalia," printed at Venice in the year 1492. Besides this, there is a copy of Hakluyt's "Early English Voyages," 1599-1600, a copy of the same edition having been sold a few years since at an enormous price, shows its great value. Another work of rarity is one of the original edition of the great Dictionary of the famous Dr. Samuel Johnston.

Through a division of the books accumulated while the Society, in conjunction with the City, maintained the Savannah Public Library, we acquired, at the time of the separation, many volumes, mainly those published during the period of over thirteen years when the Public Library occupied Hodgson Hall. Not a few of these are of peculiar interest as they give much information on the subject of the great world war during the first two years of its progress. It is to be regretted that since that time the financial condition of the Society has not permitted us to keep this collection up to date; and we, therefore, are not as rich in material relating to that most important epoch in the world's history as is desired.

A Library containing 42,000 volumes and 30,000 pamphlets, among them many of importance exceeding that of large collections of costly bound books, is of itself a treasure-house of inestimable use and value. These books and pamphlets embrace all kinds of matter, including works of reference, history, biography, science, art, literature, travel, fiction and religion. The maps in the Library are not the least of our valuable possessions.

PORTRAITS.

First among the portraits must be named the life-size oil painting of Mr. William Brown Hodgson, in whose memory the Society's home was erected and whose name it bears. It was painted by the late Carl L. Brandt, at a cost of \$3,500.00.

Another portrait, of interest from its connection with Georgia History, is that of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, who did so much in enabling Whitefield to establish and care for the noble institution at Bethesda. For a long time it was thought to be the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds, but investigation has revealed the fact that he did not paint it.

The collection includes portraits of James Habersham, Colonel Joseph Habersham, Major John Habersham, Count Pulaski, General Oglethorpe, Hugh McCall (Georgia's first historian), David Brydie Mitchell (Governor of Georgia), I. K. Tefft, (founder of the Georgia Historical Society), John MacPherson Berrien (the Society's first President), Bishop

Stephen Elliott (another President of the Society), and a large engraving of a beloved President, Colonel John Screven. An oil painting of Gov. Archibald Bulloch and his family, owned by Dr. J. S. B. Bulloch, hangs in the Library. The name of the artist is not known.

ARTICLES OF INTEREST IN RELATION TO HISTORY.

The first of the objects of great interest in connection with Georgia history is the surveyor's compass, believed, for good reasons, to have been used in laying out the streets of Savannah by Oglethorpe and his helpers.

Next in importance is a plan of Savannah as it was laid out in 1733, but dated 1734, and, with hardly a doubt, an original by Peter Gordon and dedicated "To the Honourable the Trustees for Establishing the Colony of Georgia in America."

REVOLUTIONARY WAR RELICS.

There are other articles of interest relating to Georgia during the period from the landing of Oglethorpe and the War of the Revolution; but they need not be mentioned, and attention is now called to a collection of articles used in that War, and presented to the Society shortly after its founding by General Charles R. Floyd. The most interesting of the lot is a drum which is inscribed with the words "This Drum was used in the Army of the American Revolution at the Battles of Eutaw, Saratoga and Cowpens. Presented to the Georgia Historical Society by Charles R. Floyd in 1841." It was used, by the Society's permission, during the celebration of the centennial of the Battle of Fort Moultrie, at Charleston, S. C., in June, 1776, and attracted much attention.

GIFTS.

Mr. J. Florance Minis has recently presented to the Society the walking-cane, made of a piece of live-oak from the U. S. frigate "Constitution," belonging to the late Commodore Josiah Tattnall, famous as a naval officer of the United States as well as of the Confederate States, who, on an occasion well known

to students of history, used the characteristic language: "Blood is thicker than water." We have also a large photograph of the Commodore, well framed, a remarkably fine likeness.

When Mr. John E. Ward, the distinguished Georgian, was U. S. Minister to China, he purchased a Japanese suit of armor, of fine texture, for presentation to the Georgia Historical Society, and it was brought here by the Commodore who was then on duty as a naval officer in Chinese and Japanese waters, and it is among the Society's interesting articles.

Within the past year the collection of relics has received an important addition from the McAdoo family, consisting of articles connected with the Floyds. The most valuable of these are the epaulets worn by General John Floyd.

The solid gold copy of the seal of the State Executive Department, made for and presented to the Honorable Charles J. Jenkins by the Georgia General Assembly, is in the Society's possession, the gift of Dr. Chas. Jenkins Montgomery, of Augusta, to whom it was bequeathed by Governor Jenkins. It was given to Governor Jenkins in accordance with a joint resolution, approved August 22, 1872, "in the name of the people of Georgia," and is a copy of "the one preserved and restored by him when expelled by usurpers from the office of Governor" as stated in the resolution.

MANUSCRIPTS.

The following is a list prepared by the Committee on Printing and Publishing, in the year 1915, in a report on the Society's manuscripts. Since then two items (the Hawkins Papers and Letter Books of Governors John Martin and Edward Telfair) have been printed and are not included.

Letters of General Lachlan McIntosh to Washington, Lee, Elbert, Howe and others, about the beginning of the Revolution, concerning the military affairs of the State. About sixty letters, in rather bad condition.

Notes of General James Jackson on Ramsay's History of the Revolution in South Carolina. A valuable criticism.

Letter Book of General James Jackson, 1788 to 1796. Per-

tains chiefly to military and Indian affairs. About 200 pages with about 175 words to a page. In handwriting of Gen. James Jackson.

Abstracts of Documents Relating to the State of Georgia between 1755 and 1824, and in 1893 in possession of Reginald Bolton, 110 Leadenhall St., London, and Worsley Road, Hampstead, England. A manuscript abstract of deeds, chiefly granted to parties in Georgia. A number of other documents are listed. In excellent condition and well indexed.

Letter Book of Philip Box, Postmaster at Savannah, 1804 to 1808. Letters chiefly to Postmaster General. About eighty pages.

Sales Book of George Galphin, a merchant of Silver Bluff on the Savannah River. About 100 pages of sales of ordinary articles kept in store at that time for Indians and others. Presented to the Society by Hon. George R. Black, M. C., First District of Georgia.

A Number of Miscellaneous Letters on Various Subjects.

LIBRARY BUILDING, AND OTHER PROPERTY.

The home of the Georgia Historical Society is Hodgson Hall, and it was set apart for the Society's use by the terms of a trust deed, dated June 10, 1874, from Miss Mary Telfair who was "desirous to carry into effect the wishes and intentions of Margaret Telfair Hodgson," her sister, who, "during her lifetime, commenced the structure of a building on lot number fourteen (14) Forsyth Ward, being the southwest corner of Gaston and Whitaker streets in the city of Savannah, to be called Hodgson Hall, and intended to complete the same on a plan furnished by Detlef Lienau, architect, as a memorial of her late husband, William Brown Hodgson," said property being by such deed conveyed in trust to Alexander R. Lawton, his executors and administrators, "in trust to permit the Georgia Historical Society to have the exclusive use, possession, control and management of said building and lot" on certain conditions. The lot is described as "containing one hundred and thirty-one feet on Gaston street and forty-three feet and nine inches on Whitaker and Howard streets."

On the 20th day of July, 1874, a little more than a month after the signing of the trust deed, the Georgia Historical Society purchased from Bishop Wm. H. Gross, of the Roman Catholic Church, the lot adjoining that on which Hodgson Hall stands being lot number thirteen (13) Forsyth Ward, described in the deed as "fronting forty-three feet and nine inches on Whitaker street, and extending one hundred and thirty-one feet in depth to Howard street, bounded north by lot number fourteen, east by Whitaker street, south by lot number twelve, and west by Howard street." The Society still owns this lot in fee simple. The two lots (87.5x131 feet) are enclosed as one.